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Item 2 (a) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: high-level policy dialogue with international financial and trade institutions

Statement submitted by International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-36498 (E) 140610

Please recycle

Statement

An international insolvency framework — why it is needed and what it could look like

The international financial institutions have tried to control new borrowing with the help of the World Bank's debt sustainability framework. This approach is not likely to be overly successful. It unilaterally exerts pressure on the borrower, without providing much of an incentive for the creditor to forego an investment opportunity, simply because it would eventually endanger the borrower's long-term debt sustainability. There is an extreme danger today that, in both low- and middle-income countries, a new round of defensive lending by multilateral institutions will start a new debt cycle like the one in the 1990s. It is therefore essential that the provision of fresh funding for Southern countries, which are suffering from the crisis, must be accompanied by a new mechanism to deal in a comprehensive way (i.e., involving all creditors), quickly implementable, and in a fair way with new situations of sovereign overindebtedness.

Against this background, the Doha process confirmed the call of the Monterrey Consensus for new orderly debt workout mechanisms. Proposals discussed in Doha include the International Monetary Fund's sovereign debt restructuring mechanism and also farther-reaching proposals by academia, civil society and officials of the Southern countries. Most of these proposals come under an international insolvency framework.

A new framework for sovereign debt workouts needs to differ from existing procedures in several aspects if it is to address the changed landscape of new lending. Key principles of an orderly, effective and fair debt workout mechanism include: (a) one single "insolvency" process involving all creditors. Impartiality in decision-making is needed, rather than the present creditors' hegemony over the negotiation process; (b) an automatic stay on loan enforcement, once a case has been filed; (c) impartial assessment of a sovereign sustainable debt level and hence income exemption from debt servicing.

These principles essentially do not reflect more than the operating principles of corporate or individual insolvency laws in civilized nations around the globe.

Several practical proposals to implement these principles have been made notably:

(a) The "fair and transparent arbitration process" as an ad hoc procedure. This was developed by the Austrian economist Kunibert Raffer and heralded by a number of other civil society organizations. It adds arbitration as a decision-making technique to the fundamental principles of chapter 9 of the United States Bankruptcy Code, which deals with the insolvency of municipalities;

(b) The proposals for a standing debt court. Practical proposals for a standing court have been worked out by Latin American economists Alberto Acosta and Oscar Ugarteche and by jurists Christoph Paulus and Stephen Kargman.

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Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-36518 (E) 140610

Please recycle

Statement

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, a non-governmental organization working towards the elimination of violence against women and the realization of gender equality, asserts that the pervasiveness of commercial sexual exploitation is a significant barrier to the achievement of gender equality.

The Millennium Development Goals prioritize the empowerment of women. However, misguided economic policies often have led to prioritizing revenue over gender equality. Rather than recognizing women's potential, Governments have adopted development policies effectively normalizing and, in some places, legalizing sexual exploitation. Prostitution and pornography are cultural practices that arise from the historical subordination of women to men. The Beijing Platform for Action, paragraph 118, recognizes that "[v]iolence against women ... derives essentially from cultural patterns, in particular the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices ... that perpetuate the lower status accorded to women in the family, the workplace, the community and society". The sex industry is built upon and maintains women's low social status, relegating them to the role of merchandise. To promote women's empowerment, Governments must eliminate commercial sexual exploitation, including sexualized and violent images of women in the media. The pervasiveness of pornography, especially on the Internet, fuels harmful stereotypes about women as sexual objects to be bought and sold.

Governments must adopt policies to combat the demand for commercial sex by educating young people, prosecuting perpetrators who buy and sell women, and addressing the media's sexualization of women and girls and the normalization of prostitution. Women and girls who are vulnerable as a result of poverty, racism or gender-based violence must be provided assistance, including housing, educational, financial, medical and mental health services.

We call for implementation of the Millennium Development Goals of achieving gender equality by:

- Ratifying and implementing international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others; the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.
- Strengthening laws, policies and programmes to assist victims of gender-based violence.
- Criminalizing perpetrators of sexual exploitation, including buyers and procurers of prostituted and trafficked women and girls.
- Supporting educational programmes addressing sexual exploitation, including education and empowerment of women and girls, and teaching men and boys about the harms.
- Rejecting legalization or normalization of commercial sex.

- Recognizing the role of the media in promoting sexual exploitation and adopting measures to combat the abuse of women and girls in the production and consumption of pornography.

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Statement submitted by Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-36524 (E) 140610

Please recycle

Statement

The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches welcomes the theme of the 2010 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council and its annual ministerial review, implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women.

The Commission, a fellowship of 348 churches with over 560 million Christians in more than 110 countries, affirms that all persons, both male and female, are created in God's image. God's world was meant to be one of abundance with fundamental human rights and dignity for all; women, however, are disproportionately robbed of this abundance. We affirm the promotion of gender equality and justice from a theological and human rights perspective.

We maintain that the contributions and empowerment of women and girls of all ages are fundamental, enshrined in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and international laws, and necessary for meeting all the Millennium Development Goals.

Despite national policies and international agreement to advance women's rights, existing national, international and United Nations resources and mechanisms are inadequate to eradicate and address the deprivation of human dignity faced by women. Many efforts have failed to recognize the full diversity of women's situations and conditions and the particular ways different women are disadvantaged.

The recent fifty-fourth session of the Commission of the Status of Women on the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action was a missed opportunity for Member States to make concrete commitments with timelines to achieve each of the Platform goals.

Three critical areas urgently need greater resources and actions by Member States that challenge and transform systemic barriers, if women's empowerment and gender equality is to be achieved: (i) ending the culture and practice of impunity as it relates to violence against women; (ii) enacting gender-based reform in leadership, power and decision-making processes; (iii) establishing economic justice, as many women have been disproportionally affected by the global economic and financial crisis.

The Commission calls upon Member States and the United Nations to:

- Fulfil the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by committing to and providing resources for an accountability framework for the Beijing Platform for Action that includes concrete benchmarks, timelines, monitoring, evaluations and adequate resources and by integrating the Platform, the Convention and gender analysis into all the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and all future global negotiations.
- End the culture and practice of impunity for violence against women by: (i) ending cultural practices and closing legal loopholes that grant perpetrators of violence, including States, impunity. The key to achieving this would be to

(a) train and reform police, military, legal and judicial sectors, which are often complicit in impunity; (b) include women in the training of the aforementioned sectors; and (c) enact and support sustainable programmes for men and boys to take responsibility for ending impunity and violence against women through positive training, gender awareness and human rights education; (ii) conducting national and international assessments of the culture and practice of impunity for violence against women.

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High-level segment: annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Family Welfare in Brazil Civil Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-36542 (E) 160610

Please recycle

Statement

Family Welfare in Brazil Civil Society, a Brazilian non-governmental organization dedicated to defending and promoting social, socio-environmental, sexual and reproductive, and individual and collective rights, and to contributing to social development and health improvement since 1965, works to increase the access of all people, particularly the poorest, the marginalized and those without assistance, to sexual and reproductive health services.

The organization understands that the Cairo Plan of Action, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals redefine the universal need for access to reproductive health services based on the concept of human rights and take into account the more comprehensive issues related to population, the environment and consumption patterns, the family, internal and international migration, the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, information, education and communication, technology, research and development.

On the other hand, the Plan, Platform and Goals are not enough with respect to sexual and reproductive rights specifically, gender relations must be addressed; otherwise, the inequalities will maintain the state of vulnerability of women, especially young ones. The Millennium Development Goals identify social inequality as one of the most difficult challenges that humanity faces; women still suffer from discrimination and gender-based violence and are the main victims of exclusion at different levels and in different spheres.

Considering the need to emphasize social development as a vehicle for reducing inequalities and for taking care of the necessities of the least favoured and most vulnerable members of our societies, we call upon all members of the international community, Governments, civil society and international agencies to prioritize efforts to guarantee equality of opportunity, regardless of gender, race, ethnic group, ideology, religion or sexual orientation, as a form of contributing to the reduction of poverty, and to promote the socio-economic and environmental development needed to improve quality of life.

The organization exhorts the States Members of the United Nations to implement the following recommendations:

- Promote gender equality through social services, including education and health services
- Strengthen integrated policies for the reduction of maternal morbidity
- Extend universal access to contraceptive methods
- Ensure universal access to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis
- Guarantee policies and integrated services designed to attend the needs of adolescents and youth
- Create and strengthen permanent dialogues and joint decision-making between Governments and civil society

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Statement submitted by Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-36550 (E) 170610

Please recycle

Statement

Gender equality and environmental sustainability in the development agenda of the Middle East

The experience of Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture in the Middle East and North Africa has proved that gender equality and empowerment of women are central to any realistic approach to development in the region.

The Foundation believes that no progress in the achievement of the internationally agreed goals is possible unless women are empowered to fully participate in the economic life of their countries. To this end, a preliminary step must be taken, namely the full implementation of women's rights within the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Beijing Declaration of 1995. Our work is guided by the premise that the promotion of gender equality is both a means for development and an end for the exercise of human rights by women and men.

The Foundation believes that legal constitutions and traditions should be reviewed in the light of women's right to equal opportunities and non-discrimination in both the private and public spheres. Promoting basic education, vocational training and employment of women is our organization's main contribution to the attainment of equality between men and women and to the empowerment of women in the development world.

For all these reasons, this statement is aligned with the theme of the annual ministerial review, implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women, to be held during the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2010 of the Economic and Social Council.

This statement addresses the full implementation of women's rights in Middle Eastern and North African societies through existing laws and actual practice in the Arab world, in order to further recognition of women's rights as a primary condition for achieving development.

In November 2009, the Foundation organized a seminar in Madrid on the theme "Guidelines for development in the most disadvantaged countries of the Euro-Mediterranean sphere: education, gender equality and rule of law", with 51 participants from the Middle East, Europe and North Africa (Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel, Latvia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Czech Republic, Hungary and the Russian Federation), 37 representatives of non-governmental organizations, regional Governments, think tanks, and experts in cooperation for development.

One of the objectives of the seminar was to offer recommendations for the high-level segment of the Council's 2010 substantive session. Another was to furnish solutions and alternatives that might advance the Millennium Development Goals, especially education for all. Emphasis was placed on the relationship between education and employment, gender equality, rule of law and the extension of human rights to everyone within the framework of the conflicts that have been devastating Middle Eastern and North African countries for several generations.

The Foundation firmly believes that economic development is not attainable without women's full participation in economic life. The internationally agreed goals cannot be achieved unless women are recognized as key stakeholders.

The following recommendations were made:

(a) It is important to raise awareness in Middle Eastern and North African countries that the participation of women in economic and public life should be a precondition of every development action in the region;

(b) Within each culture, reforms must clearly separate the legislation of the different religious creeds from traditional practice, the latter being open to interpretation, change and progress;

(c) Women should be encouraged to actively participate in the decision-making process, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution at all levels and phases, needs assessments, the formulation of policies, programmes and projects, budgeting, implementation monitoring, evaluations, reports and audits;

(d) Active participation in human rights-based approaches, the universal periodic review and all relevant reports on the region is also encouraged;

(e) To strengthen capacity-building and training, especially in human rights-based approaches, gender equality-based approaches, civic engagement in public policies, integrated approaches towards the issues of women and sustainable development and peace, as well as in terms of ethics, communications and networking skills;

(f) A review of the family codes of the different constitutions and legal traditions of the Middle Eastern and North African countries should be conducted. This review should take into account the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is the only norm that respects all creeds and cultural traditions;

(g) Local media could play a crucial role in raising the awareness of society about the new task Arab women loyal to their religion have to perform in order to fully participate in the development and progress of their nations;

(h) Last but not least, it would be convenient to create institutions to monitor respect for and the fulfilment of women's rights at the legislative, executive and domestic levels. Support by local and international Governments for these institutions will be necessary to provide them with the authority and the power to prosecute any kind of discriminatory action against women, as well as any violation of their rights.

The Foundation understands that, within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, there are two cross-cutting issues in terms of the human development agenda: gender equality (Goal 3) and environmental sustainability (Goal 7). As we have already expressed our opinion and recommendations concerning Goal 3, we would also like to submit our recommendations regarding the achievement of Goal 7.

The Foundation sent these recommendations to the United Nations for the informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, held in June 2010. The recommendations were formulated at a workshop on rights and commitments regarding education and sustainable development in the Middle East, held in Madrid

with the participation of 23 non-governmental organizations from Africa, Asia and Europe.

The following recommendations were made:

To Governments and the international community

- Increase public awareness of the importance of sustainable development as an essential concept that supports both economic development and the conservation of nature.
- Reinforce environmental education as a basic element of official curricula, especially for new generations.
- Set up strict environmental legislation and guarantee the capacity of local authorities to implement it.
- Develop alternative energy sources and subsidize traditional sources, such as fuel, to avoid unwanted consequences such as the deforestation caused by the poorest, who are forced to obtain energy from wood and coal (owing to the high price of fuel).
- Encourage international institutions and donors to include the environment and the fight against climate change as essential elements of all projects.
- Set up tools as "best practices" to be followed by the various sustainable development partners, and develop environmental indicators for compulsory use in all programmes financed by donors and the United Nations.
- Work to achieve peace in the Middle East, ensuring that people have the right to rule their confiscated or occupied lands and control their water and natural resources within the borders defined by the international community.

To local authorities

- Construct, promote and implement a sustainable development strategy, with the participation of all local actors.
- Establish local institutions to promote sustainable development and to serve as a platform for interaction among the various actors, within a decentralized context, facilitating creativity and diversification.
- Develop town planning that respects nature and supports the poorest, ensuring that urban expansion complies with the law and respects the natural environment.
- Implement social and economic alternatives for people living in protected areas and buffer zones, such as community-based ecotourism.

To civil society and beneficiaries

- Develop and integrate environmental indicators and tools for every project.
- Establish networking among non-governmental organizations to exchange experiences and experts at the local, national, regional and global levels.
- Strengthen beneficiaries' capacities, to allow them to become the main actors in their own development; develop successful model projects that beneficiaries

can imitate; and make the beneficiaries understand that safeguarding the environment in the long run guarantees significant economic profits.

- Get involved in campaigns to raise awareness and advocacy to support public policy changes.

To the private sector

- Support initiatives and investment projects that will promote sustainable development in poor countries.
- Allocate resources to research and development concerning alternative energy sources and climate change.
- Promote agreements among the private sector, international institutions and experts specialized in sustainable development.
- Take advantage of the positive impact that pro-environmental efforts may produce in marketing terms and adopt ethical and responsible positions.

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High-level segment: annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Friends of Africa International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-36576 (E) 170610

Please recycle

Statement

Keeping our promises to future generations: achieving gender equality in the midst of a global economic crisis

The global recession has drastically reduced the capacity of Governments, international institutions, businesses and non-governmental organizations to safeguard human rights and achieve development goals. The shrinking of foreign aid has caused development workers to fear that such objectives as the Millennium Development Goal of gender equality cannot be achieved within their previously determined timelines. Unfortunately, the common response to this problem is that there is simply not enough time, resources or political willpower to address gender equality, given current circumstances.

Gender equality should not be a luxury that is available only during good economic times. It is a safeguard against threats to human rights in a volatile and uncertain world.

African women have become visible agents in development endeavours and have increased their participation in human rights and other activities. While discussion on conflict is still dominated by men, the consequences of conflict disproportionately affect women, regardless of their social and economic status.

If we do not commit to achieving gender equality, future generations will suffer the consequences of our failure to provide them with a more suitable world. A generation of young girls will be forced to leave school in order to work or take care of their families. More young women will be pressured into lives of conflict and violence, having few other alternatives.

As development workers committed to human rights and social justice, we cannot let this happen. It does not have to, especially if we focus our efforts where they will have the greatest impact. Based on experiences with my own organization, Friends of Africa International, I believe that we can place great hope in Africa's youth.

The organization's mission is to promote human rights and rebuild failed institutions throughout Africa. Our work is focused on providing young people, particularly young African women, with the education and training necessary to defend human rights and democracy in their communities. We have witnessed the vast capacity of young people to positively affect their future. Africa's youth are the key to long-term success in achieving development goals, including gender equality.

Young women will be on a more equal footing with young men if they receive the same education and employment opportunities. If we ensure that they are equally engaged in the social and political spheres through access to voting and participation in electoral processes, we will ensure that institutions become more representative of women in the future. The integration of women in decision-making at all levels is an integral component in fulfilling both the mandate of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals.

The current economic crisis is not an excuse for inaction, or an insurmountable obstacle, or a reason to retreat on earlier promises. Demonstrating to young girls that we are committed to defending their right to be treated as equals will give them the confidence they need as equals and the courage to defend that equality in the

future. Our commitment to empowering them today is an investment with immeasurable long-term benefits for the future of gender equality and all human rights.

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Statement submitted by Global Alliance for Women's Health, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-36582 (E) 160610

Please recycle

Statement

Women and non-communicable diseases

The Global Alliance for Women's Health urges the Economic and Social Council, at its annual ministerial review, to take note of the resolution on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (A/RES/64/265) adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Data show that women around the world are uniquely and often more severely affected by non-communicable diseases. While recent actions, including the resolution, draw much-needed attention to this growing global epidemic, more work must be done to prevent women's health from being further compromised by these diseases. Continued inaction will impede the realization of all goals relating to gender empowerment and equality worldwide.

Consider the following data regarding the complications and co-morbidity faced by women with non-communicable diseases:

- Heart disease and stroke kill more women each year than cancer, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria combined.
- While incidence levels of type 2 diabetes are roughly equal, females have a higher proportion of excess death from diabetes compared to males.
- Women show a relatively higher incidence of small cell lung cancer compared with men.
- After age 50, women are affected by osteoarthritis more often than men. In women over 45 years of age, osteoporosis accounts for more days spent in hospital than many other diseases, including diabetes, myocardial infarction and breast cancer.
- Women are at greater risk for Alzheimer's disease.

The reproductive years pose additional distinctive challenges to a woman's health. The prevalence of diabetes during pregnancy is as high as 30 per cent among high-risk populations. This complication threatens the healthy development of the foetus and can also severely compromise the woman's ability for a healthy delivery.

Women are often the primary caregivers in the home. If the woman is afflicted with a disease herself, her ability to care for her family unit is weakened. This situation is exacerbated by inadequate access to care. The result is the decline of the well-being of the family unit, as well as a diminished capacity to contribute to the community and perform actions that would support empowerment and promote equality.

By elevating the level of attention and action to combat the global growth in the incidence of non-communicable diseases, the Council will directly increase the opportunities and likelihood of women worldwide to achieve equality and empowerment.